

Summary of the Quality Systems Committee Teleconference April 14, 1998

The Quality Systems Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, April 14, 1998, at 1 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Sylvia Labie of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues and proposed changes in wording in the NELAC Chapter 5.*

PROJECT SPECIFIC QUALITY ISSUES

Ms. Labie received comments from Dr. Kenneth Jackson, the Director of the Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) for the State of New York Department of Health. Dr. Jackson was concerned about Section 5.1.d of Chapter 5, which deals with the scope of the quality systems requirements in regard to project specific needs that may be less stringent than the standards in Chapter 5. In New York, several state agencies contract with environmental laboratories and the state individuals negotiating these contracts may not have the technical expertise to judge the quality of the laboratory work, and may be required to accept the lowest bid. For this reason, the responsibility for ensuring that state governmental agencies obtain data of acceptable quality rests with the ELAP in the Department of Health. If Chapter 5 is modified as indicated and adopted, it would prevent ELAP from performing its responsibilities under the New York State public health law and would preclude New York State from NELAP.

One approach to dealing with this issue would be to put forth two versions of this section, one without Section 5.d and one with it, and allow the voting members of NELAC to decide. In addition, it would be helpful to present this issue at the plenary of the next NELAC. Ms. Labie will look into scheduling time for a presentation.

The comment was made that according to Section 5.1.d, a project done without the level of quality control specified in Chapter 5 is not done under NELAP.

The comment was made that the original intent of NELAP was for the requirements to apply to EPA compliance programs. However, state agencies doing non-EPA compliance environmental data collection may have analytical measurements performed under NELAP requirements.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO SECTION D.4 RADIOANALYSIS

This section will be addressed later after further input from the radiochemistry community.

ADDITIONAL CHANGES TO CHAPTER 5 FOR CLARIFICATION

Section 5.10.2.1.b: an example of what is meant by “continuing demonstration of method performance,” such as laboratory spiking, was added to the text.

Section 5.10.2.1.d: the term “matrix” was added to the list of items that require initial demonstration of method performance to be completed.

Appendix B, definition of Method Blank: the definition was changed to capture the idea that a method blank should offer a similar challenge to the analytic instrument as an actual sample as opposed to allowing a method blank to contain pure laboratory water.

Section D.1.1.a.1: the “and” joining paragraphs i and ii was changed to “or”.

Section 5.6.2.g: paragraph g was deleted because it is redundant with paragraph h.

Section 5.7.2.c: editorial change made to text.

Appendix B, definition of Laboratory Control Sample: this definition will be moved to the NELAC glossary.

Section D.1.4: editorial change made to text.

Figure D-1: the second purity check step in the flow chart should not be deleted.

STATUS OF THE AIR SUBCOMMITTEE

The air subcommittee held its first conference call and the participants are preparing the first drafts of the applicable sections for Chapter 5. The participants were invited to the next NELAC. If enough participants plan to attend, it may be possible to schedule a meeting of this subcommittee.

ACTION ITEMS
Quality Systems Committee Teleconference
April 14, 1998

Item No.	Action Item	Date to be Completed
1.	Ms. Labie to make changes to Chapter 5, as discussed in the 4/14/98 teleconference.	Before next teleconference
2.	Ms. Labie to look into scheduling a presentation on the issue of project specific quality requirements at the next NELAC.	Before NELAC
3.	Next teleconference is scheduled for April 27, 1998, at 1 p.m. EDT. The call-in phone number is 850-488-8295.	4/27/98

PARTICIPANTS
Quality Systems Committee Teleconference
April 14, 1998

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